

**REMARKS**

Claims 9-18 and 22-34 are pending in the present application after this amendment cancels claims 1-8 and 19-21 and adds new claims 28-34. Claims 12, 16, and 17 are amended. No new matter is added by the amendments and new claims, which are supported throughout the specification and figures. In view of the following remarks, favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation that the Examiner acknowledges that claims 9-11 and 22-27 are allowable.

Claims 1-2 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Nojiri (U.S. 7,032,823). Claims 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Slade (U.S. 6,631,905). Claims 3 and 5-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nojiri (U.S. 7,032,823) in view of Hara et al. (U.S. 5,726,435). The cancellation of these claims obviates these rejections.

Claims 12-18 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nojiri in view of Hara et al. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Independent claim 12 relates to a card that includes a reference cell having a predetermined shape, a plurality of polygonal cells to form code data, and a plurality of corner cells having an identical shape. In amended claim 12, *each of the plurality of corner cells occupies a larger area than any of the polygonal cells, and the polygonal cells are provided outside an area surrounded by the plurality of corner cells.*

The Examiner relies on Nojiri as apparent disclosure of the feature of canceled claim 1 of at least one of the corner cells occupying a larger area than at least one of the rectangular cells, citing col. 8, lines 10-22, and col. 9, lines 13-67. Without admitting the veracity of this assertion

in regard to the canceled claim, Applicants submit that the disclosure of Nojiri, including figure 1A of Nojiri to which the cited sections refer, apparently disclose only one corner cell being larger than the remaining cells. In stark contrast, in the instant specification discloses that:

In this background, the corner cells 104 in this example are formed to occupy larger areas than the rectangular cells 106. In the image analysis apparatus 20 according to this example, the four corner cells 104 are used to detect the code data field 102, as described later. This translates to the fact that, if the four corner cells 104 fail to be detected, the rectangular cells 106 cannot be detected. Therefore, it is imperative in this two-dimensional code that the corner cells 104 be recognized properly prior to the recognition of the rectangular cells 106. ***By forming the four corner cells 104 to be larger than the rectangular cells 106, the rate of recognition of the four corner cells 104 is increased.***

(Specification; page 19, lines 8-20; emphasis added). The recited feature provides the unexpected benefit mentioned in the specification of increasing a rate of recognition, and therefore it is respectfully submitted that this feature is not rendered obvious by any of the references. Applicants submit that the feature of each of the plurality of corner cells occupying a larger area than any of the polygonal cells is not disclosed, nor even suggested, in the prior art.

Additionally, Applicants submit that Nojiri does not disclose or suggest that the polygonal cells are provided outside an area surrounded by the plurality of corner cells. Applicants submit that the claimed invention, as shown in figure 12 and discussed at page 49, line 2, to page 51, line 1, discloses providing the code data field 102a and the code data field 102b ***outside the area surrounded by the four corner cells*** 104, a relatively large space is made available in the center of the game card 4, where an image of a character may be printed. These features of the invention of claim 12 are not disclosed, nor suggested, in any of the cited prior art. Therefore, for at least the above-mentioned reasons, claim 12 and its dependents are allowable.

Claim 16 relates to a rectangular card including a reference cell having a predetermined shape, a plurality of polygonal cells forming code data, and a plurality of corner cells having an identical shape. In the rectangular card of amended claim 16, *each of the plurality of corner cells occupies a larger area than any of the rectangular cells*. Additionally, in claim 16, the *plurality of corner cells are provided at a first edge and a second edge of the card opposite to each other, and at least some of the plurality of polygonal cells are provided in the neighborhood of a third edge different from the first edge and the second edge and are arranged parallel with the third edge*.

Applicants submit that, as discussed above, none of the cited prior art discloses that each of the plurality of corner cells occupies a larger area than any of the rectangular cells. Additionally, Applicants submit that none of the cited prior art discloses the arrangement of the corner cells and polygonal shapes recited in the claims, which correspond to the arrangement shown in figure 12. Therefore, for at the least the above-mentioned reasons, claim 16 and its dependents are allowable.

New claim 28 relates to a rectangular card that includes a reference cell having a predetermined shape, a plurality of polygonal cells to form code data, and four corner cells. In the rectangular card of claim 28, each of the four corner cells occupies a larger area than any of the polygonal cells, and two of the corner cells are provided in a neighborhood of a first edge, and the other two corner cells are provided in a neighborhood of a second edge opposite to the first edge. Additionally, in the card of claim 28, at least some of the plurality of polygonal cells are provided in a neighborhood of a third edge different from the first edge and the second edge and are arranged parallel with the third edge, and the other polygonal cells are provided in a

neighborhood of a fourth edge opposite to the third edge and are arranged parallel with the fourth edge.

Applicants submit that, as discussed above, none of the cited prior art discloses that each of the plurality of corner cells occupies a larger area than any of the rectangular cells, nor the specific arrangement of the corner cells and polygonal shapes recited in the claims. Therefore, for at the least the above-mentioned reasons, claim 28 and its dependents are allowable.

In view of the remarks set forth above, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested. However, if for any reason the Examiner should consider this application not to be in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned attorney at the number listed below prior to issuing a further Action.

Any fee due with this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-1290.

Respectfully submitted,

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